Speech

by

George Bush

Director of Central Intelligence

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Thank you Dr. Getting. Let me say at first how pleased I am to be reinvited to appear before this prestigious audience. I remember in 1972 I was Ambassador at the United Nations and was to appear out here, I think on a Monday, and we had a rather hectic meeting of the Security Council, and the subject was the Middle East, a subject that the United Nations still is, the Middle East for years later but nevertheless I came out here dead tired and was accorded a very warm spontaneous reception and I've never really forgotten it. Dr. Getting, I appreciate your warm introduction. I think when I look at the head table here I am impressed. Some of you may have read in the paper that -- maybe you thought when you invited me, let's start with it this way, that you were going to have a fellow that was going to be the Director of Central Intelligence for some time to come. Between the time I was invited and the time I appeared something happened. I'm not the only person unemployed. (joke)

I think that tells you of the seven oversight committees I report to in the U.S. Congress as Director of Central Intelligence and maybe it's not so bad after all. What I want to do today is go through just a few formal remarks and try to respond or dodge depending on what the question is as best I can in the time that remains. But I am deeply con-

concerned about the security of our country. I'm deeply concerned with all the respect in the world for constitutional constraints that must be on any government agency, I nevertheless am concerned about how one conducts an all important national foreign intelligence business in the open, if you will. The risk of disappointing those of you in this audience who have classic notions about romantic and secretive spies, I want to start by divulging my mission here. I don't propose merely to inform you although I hope to do that to the extent I can. I hope to persuade you, persuade you not to any direction of policy because that in the job as Director of Central Intelligence I can't do, and I won't do it. I take very seriously that the constraints on the Director to provide intelligence to the President and have the policy makers shape the policy. But persuade you to resolve to bring to public awareness and understanding to replace sensationalism, exaggeration, and rehashing of the past in the discussion of our foreign intelligence activities. In our time it is cliché to speak of the communications explosion and the vast amount of information that flows around the globe. We know how difficult it is to collect and analyze and select and distill information into knowledge and how important that knowledge is to the rational process of decision making. To put it bluntly, whether in personal life or in business or in the arena of international relations, the side with superior intelligence, the superior knowledge, the more accurate

analysis, and consequently the sounder decision has the edge. More specifically our defense strategy is fundamentally dependent on the availability of political warning and that means on excellent intelligence. Dr. Getting referred to our technological ability to tell the policy-makers what's going on. It's our function to say not only how many missiles the Soviet Union has but what they are capable of doing and we better be the best at that. In the last few years or so, we have witnessed an astounding amount of sensation-oriented publicity given to a limited amount of information which has had the following effects: it's caused our friends and our allies to call into serious question the ability of America to keep important secret our secrets or their secrets. It's created serious concern among nations which rely on our support and which are led into doubt as to our ability to give that support and finally, it is provided our declared and determined adversaries with information which otherwise they would have had to expend a substantial amount of effort to obtain if indeed they'd been able to obtain it at all. And at the very least this kind of publicity provided grist for the propaganda mills of our adversaries. Soviet wire services hummed with the stories, CIA having caused the so-called American legion disease, a juicy tidbit which they could probably claim to be citing as they did this from American press sources. Castro accused the CIA

of bombing a Cuban airline. The CIA was not involved but when an outraged Secretary of State on behalf of the U.S. Government, categorically and completely denied this faceless charge, Castro's allegations continued to reverberate after Kissinger's statement on some of the editorial pages in this country. A rather shop-worn accusation in the Soviet publication last May that three American newsmen were spies, you may remember it, was received by many in this country with a measure of credence. Promptly CIA was accused of hanging a dark cloud of suspicion over the entire professional profession of journalism. Only a few in this country pointed out what the Russians were about in trying to name these innocent American reporters as spying for the CIA. Recently I saw a commentary from Pravda reporting on a Soviet book full of distortions and lies that is written based largely on Senate Committee hearings that ended early this year. They took these hearings, they distorted them, and they sent them all around the world. The Soviet Union has done this. On November 25, just the other day, just before I started on this trip, a press office handed me a clipping from Tass, a head byline that a federation for peace and freedom, Soviet propaganda going out into Asia, distorting the CIA involvement is developed in these hearings. Our adversaries, the KGB, the Cuban service, have capitalized on the excesses and used it to damage this country all around the world. I

have recognized that the concept of secrecy is one that presents very special and real problems in a democratic and open society. Many in our country still imperfectly understand the important role that secrecy must play in any professional foreign intelligence service. Sometimes the confusion is procedural. I find a great deal of misunderstanding about our refusal to disclose sources and methods of intelligence. Many people including some journalists have the lingering impression or at least suspicion that somehow this refusal is in vague reliance on a spuriously invoked concept of national security and there had been a handful of cases where national security was used as a shield over something that clearly should not have been so classified. These people don't seem to realize that such refusal is properly based on the law of the land. By law, by the National Security Act of 1947 the Director of Central Intelligence is charged with the protection of sources and methods of foreign intelligence and substantively the rationale for the protection of sources and methods is a sound one. In many instances our ability to monitor vital information would be jeopardized and perhaps destroyed if the other side were aware of the methods that we employed to collect that information. Finally, the concept of secrecy itself is frequently presented and perceived as one that is alien to our free society. I submit to you that that simply is not

so. Secrecy is present in our system. Indeed, I would suggest that it's necessary and frequently that it is fundamental. There are many secrets that we have set and protect as essential to the conduct of our society -- the secret of the ballot box, secret of grand jury proceedings, secrecy of court deliberations, the confidentiality of the relationship of attorney and client, or doctor and patient or priest and confession. Besides we know that individual privacy, for instance, is essential to our concept of freedom. One might make the point that our country in its international dealings is entitled to some privacy and in fact the concept of diplomatic confidentiality is one that is widely observed around the world, and universally accepted. Occasionally, diplomatic confidentiality emerges with the needs of intelligence secrecy. It's interesting to observe in this connection that the consequences of official admission or denial of an intelligence operation are not automatic or automatically predictable. For instance, traditionally spies caught by the other side were disowned and yet, recently there have been various approaches to the question. In 1960 President Eisenhower assumed public responsibility, as you all remember, for the U-2 mission. The result, in that case, was direct confrontation with Mr. Khrushchev. On the other hand, we've had cases where news accounts of intelligence operations based on leaks were published and the government declined any

official comment, in which cases international confrontation was avoided; and there's another consequence, a particularly painful one of disclosure that is sometimes overlooked and frequently ignored. The name, for instance, of Richard Welch, the distinguished, and respected senior CIA officer in Athens was published in an American publication and now I can't tell you whether this was new information to the KGB for instance but what it did do was to finger Richard Welch for whoever it was that brought about his assassination two weeks later. His death surely brought no advantage and enhancement of credibility to those who are determined to pursue disclosure simply for the sake of disclosure. It's not secrecy if we should deny ourselves, keeping in mind always that it is designed to protect our legitimate and vital secrets not from ourselves but from our adversaries. And it is because we have an open society and because our adversaries can reach into our society, into our institutions and a free press, open government, that we must have the criteria of need to know. That we must have rational and responsible standards for security classification. That we must have effective individual protection of government secrets and that I believe that we should also have adequate laws providing enforceable sanctions for improper breach of legitimate confidentiality. These laws at this time we simply do not have. The direction by the President and our

faithful reporting to seven committees of the United States Congress, and our adherence to the Executive Order promulgated by the President this winter and are faithfully reporting to the Operations Advisory Group which is responsible for covert action, that part of the controversial part of the Intelligence Community that accounts for less than 2% of the CIA budget. This direction and this reporting minimizes, if not eliminates, the risk of the CIA conducting covert action without direction and without approval from the highest levels of our government. It is not a realistic fear that this kind of "rogue elephant" or uncontrolled action that people are concerned about can take place given the restrictions we have and given the determination we have in the Intelligence Community to follow these guidelines. I am convinced that the interest of the United States in a world in which we face powerful, determined, and often unscrupulous adversaries demands that we retain a capability for covert action. It should be properly used, used with restraint but no President should be denied -- in my judgment and this judgment was apparently backed by the Committees and Senate and House when they refused to eliminate this capability -- no President should be denied having covert action as a possible tool for his use. In it's essence this capability gives us the option of protecting vital interests at times and places where diplomatic negotiation is no longer feasible and military action unjustified. Are we to stand by and

watch friendly governments be toppled by actions of those who are hostile in the United States and to our system of government? And if we unilaterally and arbitrarily reject the option of covert action as a legitimate means of defending ourselves and our allies, we would be reducing our choice of means in some dangerous situations to either rely on another diplomatic demarche, some note, or taking undeniable armed action. Covert action is a middle ground, an activity that can be undertaken quietly and intelligently to modify circumstances in the best interests of the United States. While retaining this capacity which already stated should be used sparingly, our existing foreign intelligence mechanism makes sure that such an activity if needed by the President would be prudently conceived, properly approved, and effectively supervised. Let me conclude on a very personal note. When I came to Langley just last January to be sworn in as Director of Central Intelligence, I wasn't a stranger to the intelligence product. In Peking and at the United Nations I have used the product of intelligence and found it very good. For the last ten months I have worked day-in and day-out in a close and intensive fashion with the professionals of the United States Intelligence Community, particularly those of the Central Intelligence Agency. When I went out there as Director from a varied past, I'm sure the professionals of the Intelligence Community were asking themselves, you know,

what kind of new Director are we getting in a rather controversial and critical time in history at this Agency. I was telling Mr. Thornton the great thing about this institution is its discipline, and its willingness to support whoever is constitutionally placed by the President at its head. I was in China; I was in the United Nations; I was in the private sector of business, exciting business that I love very much; I was in the U.S. Congress for four years, and headed one of the great political parties, too. I've been in many diversified allocations of jobs, but I can tell you in conclusion, that public controversy to the contrary notwithstanding, I have never been associated in anything I've done with more people who are blessed with the true sense of patriotism who are willing to serve their country with no claim whatsoever. I have never been associated with more unselfish dedication than I have been privileged to be associated with as Director of Central Intelligence. Thank you very much.